

"The Foremost Baking Powder
in all the World."

Dr. Price's Cream Baking Powder

Carried off
HIGHEST HONORS
at the
World's Columbian
Exposition,
Chicago,
1893.

Verona Ream's History.

BY ALICE HURR.

"Vic, old friend, have you ever been in love?"

"Well, Tom, what a question! When you know so much of my early life, surely you haven't forgotten little black-eyed Susie Hall? Jupiter! how I loved the little sprit, and how heartbroken I was when she eloped with John Maxwell!"

"I was just sixteen then and no twenty was a rapid succession of love affairs, until I verily believe romance of exaltation, and now at the age thirty I forget to think of such things."

"I had hoped you had some idea of 'little form which would prove a safe against danger into which I shall induce you this eve, with your consent."

"Will risk anything in the way of brisques and crinolines? Is the merry rep?"

"I've an engagement for the day, but express find you at six fully equipped for a visit with Cupid. Good bye."

"Vic Wybrant and Tom Maynard were graduates of one of the best law schools New York—endowed by nature with inherent amount of good looks and by heritance with a neat supply of this world's goods, they saw only the bright side of life."

"Victor, for graduating went to Europe, for whence he had just returned, to be warmly welcomed by his friend, who in the meantime had established himself in a lucrative practice and an elegant suite of rooms at No. 3 Broadway."

"When you friends met and formed a friendship which was a time service cement more closely; they had both at their parents early in life, and were fortunate enough to have a brother's sister, consequently the congeniality in his nature led them to form a warm friendship in a great measure met the demands of nature."

"At eight o'clock two friends alight from a carriage front of a plain two-story brick structure in a vine, rose-hedge and honeysuckle."

"They were ushered into the parlor to be met by Mrs. Ream, a tall, stately lady of fifty, who greeted Mr. Maynard as a friend. Miss Ream engaged at the piano with a gentle, came forward at once and met her friends."

"I can give you only faint idea of Miss Ream, without having perfect features, taken separately the combination is singularly beautiful, but her lovely golden brown eyes, dark hair with a world of depth, a complexion of perfect fairness, added to a tall, willowy form, the personification of grace and she has none conception of the general appearance of one of the most popular beauties of Gotham society."

"Having lost her mother at an early age she was placed at a fashionable boarding school near Boston, from which she graduated at the age of twenty, two thorough training at school, for proficiency in music and fondness for good writers, coupled with natural versatility made her sought after by the most select."

"A year after Verona entered society her father brought home his second wife, a lovely cultured lady between whom and her daughter a warm friendship sprang up, which ripened into a fond affection and 'tis to these two brilliant women our friend Victor is introduced."

"Mr. Maynard fell into conversation with Mrs. Ream and Mr. Thompson, who were to be a cousin and neighbor, leaving Mr. Wybrant and Miss Ream to discuss music, books and travels all of which came with a due appreciation and knowledge."

"After a somewhat lengthy call, Tom

summed his friend and after a polite adieu, they drove home in comparative silence, just before leaving the carriage Victor astonished his friend by saying, "Tom, that woman is a history."

"Which woman, Mrs. Ream? No, what do I know of Mrs. Ream?"

"Yes that may be, but Vic, dear, be careful you don't wish you never knew Miss Ream?"

"Tell me Tom what you know about her, she is the most fascinating mystery I ever saw."

"Well, to be brief she was introduced to New York society three years ago, by her aunt, Mrs. Newton Thornton, one of the leaders here and although the time has been so short, her admirers have been numerous, many have sought eagerly to conquer her cold reserve and capture the queen and belle for their own, but to all she turns a deaf ear."

"And am I the unfortunate cause of your leaving home, friends, business and all that make up one's life?"

"I shall be better away—only one thing more I ask, should this obstacle to this mystery maid, will you tell me, will you write to me?"

"I feel sure I'll never alter my plans and would be happier to know you were making friends in your new home, and might some day marry a good woman, and find in looking of my great-grandfather being made the plaything of this sin-cursed world."

"How I longed to hold her in my arms and tell her how I loved and pitied her. I took this miserable wreck to San Francisco and found a quiet boarding place among good people. I determined never to let him annoy her again. By degrees I learned his history. He was a gay college boy and on one of his weekly visits to his sister, he met Verona, who attended the same school. They formed a fancy for each other which was constantly fed by Verona's romantic nature and the wily sister, who understood the situation, was successful in persuading her brother to take a trip to a distant city. On the occasion of one of Verona's visits to Lillian Ward's home a secret marriage was planned and brought about. The sister lived on in a state of rage and the ceremony went soon afterwards to New Mexico, leaving the secret to be kept by Verona and Hugh Ward. At the time Verona graduated from college she was traveling in Europe, from which place he returned a disgraced, worthless man, with only ambition enough to keep himself in money to live on; this he finally demanded of Verona and get it as the price of alliance."

"After the failure of J. Ward & Co., and the death of Hugh's father, the young man would absent himself from New York for many months at a time, and it was on one of these absences I found him."

"It was long before I learned all; only when he knew that he was certainly near death he made a full confession. He told me on the occasion of my last visit that Verona was only his by law; but only on one occasion he ever kissed her and that just after the ceremony. He believed her pure, good and true, and she had always been far above him."

"Now Tom, my story is told and what I want done is for you to go to 820 Bank street where this poor fellow died four days ago and collect her letters and brooch of his death and take them to her. I had hoped to do this myself, but God will otherwise."

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"I was thinking how all nature is happy and content, only man is at war with himself, why can't he be calm and content as my surroundings?"

"Long and earnestly I pondered and was comforted; I thought of Christ's weary pilgrimage on earth and what he left to make that pilgrimage and compared his glorious triumph over evil with my weak repining and how a little while I might inherit eternal glory through him. I arose comforted to take up my burden of life more cheerfully, to be more for my fellowman and think less of self."

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Libel, Verona's devoted maid, came at the usual hour and with cat-like tread placed everything in order, and waited until her mistress's bell at last growing impatient she gently opened the door and spoke. Verona placed a head-ache, and the faithful Libel insisted on administering all kinds of remedies, but to no avail, until the request to be let alone, at last the faithful creature retired to the adjoining room to keep watch for four long hours, when she joined her parents at their five o'clock dinner no allusion was made to her recent illness."

"Mr. Ream was called away soon after dinner and his wife retired to her room, leaving Verona at the piano. She played for hours after, pouring out her very soul in strange, weird music like the last wail of a lost soul, then striking to soft, pathetic strains that would bring tears to the eyes of the most hardened heart, she played as she never did before, her very soul was in it."

"Suddenly she was startled by a servant handing her a card and looking up she saw Mr. Wybrant standing in the door, summoning all her courage and control, she went out in music which her guest took no an indifferent interest; at last he drew a chair directly in front of her and with the bright light shining full on their faces, he told her his great, his all-absorbing love for her, and begged her to be his wife; at the world of wife, she raised her hand as if to ward off a blow and said in a strained, nasal tone, "Don't, I'll never marry," and notwithstanding Victor Wybrant pleaded long and eloquently for some sort of hope, her sad, low-toned manner was the same. "I cannot," "I cannot." At last having compassion on her evident distress and excitement, he made her a sorrowful "good night."

"He made his way home sadder than he had ever felt before, however not entirely hopeless, for he believed Verona loved him and he thought love and youth conquered all things."

"They met often in society, but Verona was always surrounded by friends and though always kind there was no hope written in her pale, proud face, once after many months he chanced to find her alone quietly possessed himself of her hand, he looked her straight in the eyes, asked her why she would not marry him, she said, "You love me, I feel sure you do."

"Her reply came calmly, but firmly, "Mr. Wybrant, do not seek to penetrate my reasons, but accept the fact I shall never marry."

"And if this is final I bid you goodbye, I leave New York next week to make my home among strangers; I will not be a bother to you, but I shall be better away—only one thing more I ask, should this obstacle to this mystery maid, will you tell me, will you write to me?"

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"You do not know Tom that once or twice a year she goes to San Francisco, to take a trip away among the mountains, to ease the great longing in my heart. Nature is my only solace, she reads and takes away so much of the bitterness of life. Well two years ago I wandered there, then I found a small Mexican village in Southern California, quiet old place at the foot of the mountains; here I found shelter and food and the next day I walked out north of the town to get a good view of the surroundings. I followed a narrow path for about an hour, when I reached an opening on the mountain side with the level southern view. I found a seat and for many hours drank in the scenery. The olive grove far to the south, the old one of Portugal, the fertile plains with the little brooklets wandering through the arid soil, the great herds of cattle and sheep grazing on the green fields, with the primitive town nestled just below me, added a picture to please the eye of the most fastidious lover of nature."

"I was thinking how all nature is happy and content, only man is at war with himself, why can't he be calm and content as my surroundings?"

"Long and earnestly I pondered and was comforted; I thought of Christ's weary pilgrimage on earth and what he left to make that pilgrimage and compared his glorious triumph over evil with my weak repining and how a little while I might inherit eternal glory through him. I arose comforted to take up my burden of life more cheerfully, to be more for my fellowman and think less of self."

"As I moved forward a paper fluttered from behind a large stone, and fell just in my pathway. I picked it up, thinking some other lover of nature had found this beautiful spot. I looked at the writing which bore the stamp of age and Tom I bore something else, the name 'Verona Ream,' was written distinctly at the bottom of the page. I followed the direction from which it came and just around the rock where the path led, I found a man sitting with his back to me, and I saw around him which he evidently had been reading. The man though not very thin was haggard and gray, showing unmistakable signs of age. I quickly picked up the letter and devoured the contents; a wild desire to solve a mystery impelled me. A secret marriage with at school, a slow but sure revelation to her great-grandfather, a constant struggle with this man to keep the secret, large sums of money furnished him this I read and all the bitter part was explained. I was sorry that I was not, not to think, but suffer yet Tom, God, in his infinite mercy has ordered our nature that we realize only a part of our suffering, otherwise I should have died in looking of my great-grandfather being made the plaything of this sin-cursed world."

"How I longed to hold her in my arms and tell her how I loved and pitied her. I took this miserable wreck to San Francisco and found a quiet boarding place among good people. I determined never to let him annoy her again. By degrees I learned his history. He was a gay college boy and on one of his weekly visits to his sister, he met Verona, who attended the same school. They formed a fancy for each other which was constantly fed by Verona's romantic nature and the wily sister, who understood the situation, was successful in persuading her brother to take a trip to a distant city. On the occasion of one of Verona's visits to Lillian Ward's home a secret marriage was planned and brought about. The sister lived on in a state of rage and the ceremony went soon afterwards to New Mexico, leaving the secret to be kept by Verona and Hugh Ward. At the time Verona graduated from college she was traveling in Europe, from which place he returned a disgraced, worthless man, with only ambition enough to keep himself in money to live on; this he finally demanded of Verona and get it as the price of alliance."

